

# *Office of the Mayor*

ROBERT G. ORTT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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June 9, 2014

## **Mayor Ortt Announces Placement of Boat Steward At Two of NT Boat Launches**

NORTH TONAWANDA - Mayor Robert G. Ortt has announced that the city is partnering with New York State Parks on a boat stewardship program that is being implemented at boat launches and marinas along Lake Erie, Niagara River, Lake Ontario, St. Lawrence River and Tonawanda Creek. The goal of the new program that is fully funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant received from the US EPA is to prevent the direct introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species transported during recreational and resource use into Lake Erie and Lake Ontario through education. Boat stewards will be educating the public about aquatic invasive species, in addition to performing voluntary inspections of watercraft. A boat steward will be scheduled from Thursdays through Sundays at 8AM to 6:30PM and rotate between the Service Drive boat launch located along the Tonawanda Creek (Erie Canal) on Sweeney Street, and the boat launch along the Niagara River at Gratwick Riverside Park on River Road.

Tonawanda Creek was identified as a major boating area of concern due to the newly discovered hydrilla infestation. Hydrilla is considered one of the most invasive species in New York, and is likely to cause major economic and ecological impacts if it is able to spread throughout the creek system. The boat steward program that was designed in partnership with NY Sea Grant, Paul Smith's College, and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, will aim to reduce the spread of this particular invasive, in addition to a large list of other invasive plants and animals.

Mayor Ortt stated, "This program will help to educate the public on the hydrilla infestation, and will hopefully reduce or eliminate the spread of aquatic invasive species affecting the waterways around our City."

The stewardship program just began in the city and will end Labor Day weekend.

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